MASTER
NEGATIVE
NO. 92-80471-6

MICROFILMED 1992

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES/NEW YORK

as part of the
"Foundations of Western Civilization Preservation Project"

Funded by the
NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Reproductions may not be made without permission from
Columbia University Library

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

The copyright law of the United States -- Title 17, United States Code -- concerns the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material...

Columbia University Library reserves the right to refuse to accept a copy order if, in its judgement, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of the copyright law.

AUTHOR:

CRISP, STEPHEN

TITLE:

AN EPISTLE TO FRIENDS CONCERNING THE ...

PLACE:

LONDON

DATE:

1780

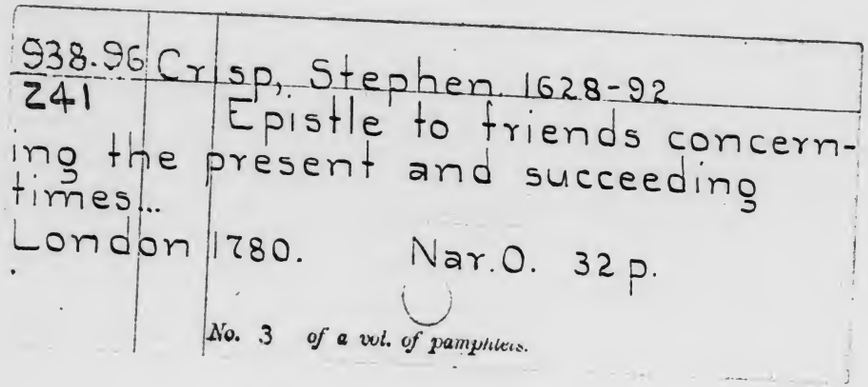
Master Negative #

92-80471-6

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
PRESERVATION DEPARTMENT

BIBLIOGRAPHIC MICROFORM TARGET

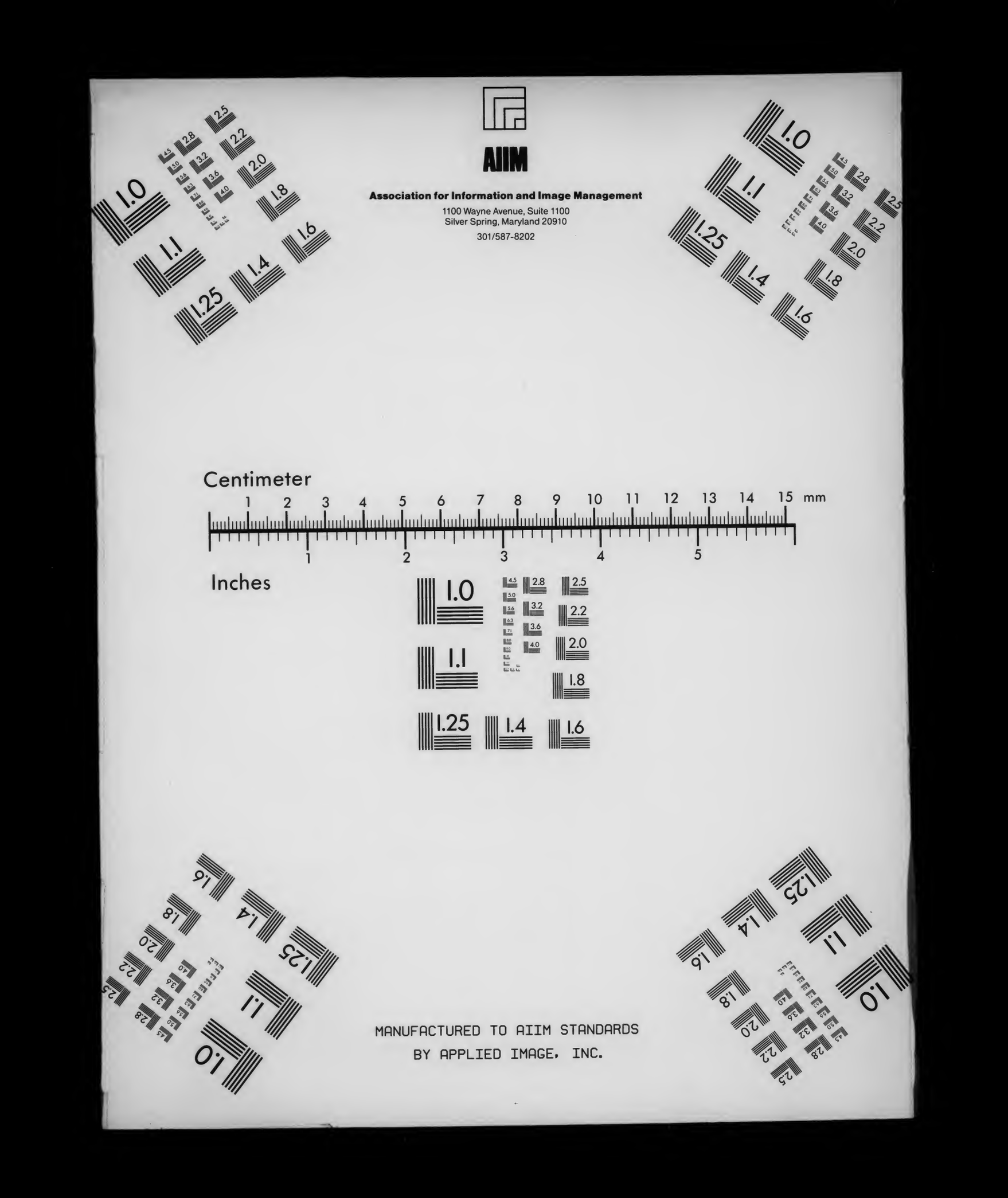
Original Material as Filmed - Existing Bibliographic Record


938.96 Crisp, Stephen. 1628-92
Z41 Epistle to friends concerning the present and succeeding times...
London 1780. Nar.O. 32 p.
No. 3 of a vol. of pamphlets.

Restrictions on Use:

TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm REDUCTION RATIO: 11x
IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB
DATE FILMED: 2/19/92 INITIALS TM
FILMED BY: RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS, INC WOODBRIDGE, CT


AIIM
Association for Information and Image Management
1100 Wayne Avenue, Suite 1100
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
301/587-8202
Centimeter
Inches
MANUFACTURED TO AIIM STANDARDS
BY APPLIED IMAGE, INC.

No. 3

AN

EPISTLE

TO

FRIENDS

CONCERNING THE

Preſent and Succeeding TIMES:

BEING

A Faithful Exhortation and Warning to all Friends, who profeſs the TRUTH, to beware of the manifold Wiles of the Enemy, and to ſtand armed in the Light of the LORD GOD of Heaven and Earth, againſt his Aſſaults, that ſo they may be ready to anſwer the Call and Requirings of the LORD.

ALSO,

Something ſignified of the Miſery of the Succeeding Times, that all may be prepared, and that the evil Day may not overtake any unawares, but ſuch as turn away their Ear from COUNSEL.

By one who is a Traveller in the Way of Peace, and hath Good-will towards all Men, and more eſpecially to the Houſhold of Faith; STEPHEN CRISP.

" Let him that hath an Ear, hear what the Spirit ſaith to " the Churches." REV. ii.

LONDON:
Printed and Sold by JAMES PHILLIPS, in George-Yard, Lombard-Street, 1780.

THE

PREFACE.

THE enſuing Tract is re-publiſhed at the Requeſt of ſeveral Friends, who thought it might be of Service to ſettle the the Minds of many in theſe unſtable Times, and incline them to look Home to that Rock which has been, is, and will be, the only Safety for the Righteous, in all Storms and Trials of every Kind which may attend them in this Life; and it was thought neceſſary to reprint it for general Service at this Time, wherein there are ſuch Commotions, Wars, and Rumours of Wars in the Earth.

AN

EPISTLE

TO

FRIENDS concerning the Preſent and Succeeding TIMES.

DEAR FRIENDS,

YOU whom the Lord hath reached unto, in this the Day of his Love, and to whom he hath made known the Way of Truth and Righteouſneſs, through the raiſing up of that holy living Witneſs of himſelf, that long lay hid and buried in you, and hath brought you to a ſecret feeling of ſomething in yourſelves, that is worth the minding and regarding; and the Lord cauſing this to appear in the Day of your ſeeking, as a *Light* diſcovering Darkneſs and its Power, by which ye were formerly held, and given you by his Spirit a Senſe add ſecret Hope, that in this *Light* the Way of Deliverance was to be attained unto; this Hope made you not aſhamed of the *Light* which before you hated, but you came to know and embrace it, even while others ſtill hated it, and you for its ſake; yet your Hearts being affected with the Hope that did appear therein, could not but ſo far join unto it, as to make publick Profeſſion of it for its own ſake, and for no other Ends or Deſigns, or Intereſt at all, but with Reſolution in that *Light*, to wait for the Salvation of God. *Dear Friends*, it is for you aforementioned, that both now,

now, and for ſome Days and Weeks, my Heart hath been deeply exerciſed, even Night and Day; and the Aboundings of the Father's Love do often overcome me, and draw me forth now to ſay and write theſe Things unto you, for your Admonition and Eſtabliſhment. And indeed it is you who did thus rightly own the Way of Truth, and knew your Believing to be the Gift and Mercy of God to your Souls, that I do aim at; for thoſe who have taken up the Profeſſion of the precious Truth upon By-reſpects and ſiniſter Ends, and but for Reaſons propounded in their carnal Minds, though I do pity them, yet I have not much at this Time to ſay to them, but this, *The Day ſhall declare them, and their Garments ſhall not hide them.*

But you, Oh *my Friends!* who had Fellowſhip with us in the deep Travails of our Beginnings, and did come to Truth the ſame Way, and have known the Power and Virtue of it, many Times overcoming you in your inward Man, which hath made you cry out, *Lord, evermore give us of this Bread*; and hath made you as a watered Garden: Oh *Friends!* how ſhall I expreſs or ſignify unto you thoſe Longings, thoſe ardent Deſires, and earneſt Breathings of my Soul, that you, even you, may abide to the End of all Trials, Tribulations, and Adverſities, and may inherit that Crown of Immortality which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, may not by any means be bereft thereof. This is ſingly my Travail in Body and Spirit, that you may be kept and preſerved out of all the ſubtil Snares of the wicked One, who hunts for the Souls, even of thoſe who have believed; and therefore in dear and tender Love I have a few Things,

Thing, to write unto you for the clearing of my Conſcience, and diſcharging my Duty in the Sight of the Lord: and the Lord give you all a tender and an underſtanding Heart, that both you and I may yet have Cauſe daily to praiſe the Lord in the glorious Light of his Salvation, which he hath manifeſted among us by the revealing his Son Jeſus Chriſt, to whom belongs Dominion, Honour and Glory, for ever. *Amen.*

And firſt, *dear Friends*, it is in my Heart to put you in Remembrance of that by which we were called and convinced, which, as a Foundation Principle, was laid in and among you, and it being unchangeable and unalterable in itſelf, doth therefore admit of no Alteration or Change in thoſe who are rightly kept to it.

It was a *Light* which aroſe in our Hearts, and ſhined forth from God the Father of Lights, carrying in its Appearance the Nature and Property of God, both in its condemning Evil, which the Enemy had ſown or planted in us, and owning, allowing, and juſtifying every Thing that was good and honeſt, juſt and equal; even thoſe Thoughts in our Hearts which were for turning towards the Lord, and ſeeking his Righteouſneſs; theſe Thoughts were juſtified and encouraged by the *Light*, and all the contrary diſcovered and judged, as they were brought to it to be tried. Now, this *Light* did our Souls rejoice in, as they had good Cauſe, though it took away our former Rejoicings; our Pleaſures in Vanities and Iniquity died, our Glory in this World withered, our Friendſhip with the Sons of Men decayed, and we ſtood in the *Light* and ſaw all theſe Things,

and

and were not ſorry at it, but waited daily to ſee theſe Things more and more brought to paſs; neither was there a permitting our Thoughts to go out, how we might prevent thoſe Damages, or repair theſe Loſſes, but the Croſs of Chriſt was indeed our glorying or rejoicing; and the Hope that was before us did make us deſpiſe the Pleaſures, Treaſures and Honours, Friendſhips and Delights of this World; and in thoſe Days you grew into a Feeling of the heavenly Joy, where the Hundred-fold was witneſſed in your Boſoms, and the Zeal of the Lord was kindled by his own Spirit in you, againſt whatſoever this *Light* of Jeſus in the Conſcience did witneſs againſt. And the Lord beheld your Integrity, and bleſſed you, and multiplied you, and added to your Strength and Stature; and then did the Fruits of this glorious Work abound among you, in three more general and ſpecial Effects; by which Effects, or by their Continuance among you, let all now come to ſearch and try themſelves, that ſo, *dear Friends*, thoſe who have continued faithful in them all, may perſevere in like manner to the End: And thoſe, who upon true Search do find that they have failed, and fallen ſhort in all or any of them, may make haſte to repent, and to turn to that which was the Root of them all, that they may not be found as fruitleſs and withered Branches in the Day that cometh, leſt they be cut off and utterly conſumed from among the living Branches of the Vine; for a Day cometh that *Truth* will look into the Fig-tree for Fruit, and Leaves will not defend it from the Curſe and Blaſting.

The

The three eſpecial Fruits that did ſpring forth from this bleſſed Root, and were and are to continue and increaſe in us, and among us to the End, are theſe, *viz.*

1. PURITY, manifeſted in a godly Converſation.

2. UNITY, manifeſted in dear and tender Love one towards another.

3. FAITHFULNESS, manifeſted in bearing a conſtant and faithful Teſtimony to the Things we had received and believed, though it were unto great Loſs and Sufferings.

And againſt all theſe doth the wicked One appear, to ſee if he can make you barren concerning them, and that with divers Wiles and Subtilties, that he may prevail on you, and not be known to be the Enemy, but might ſo overcome you, as that you might both ſubmit to him, and then plead for him and his Snares and Wiles, as being juſt, right, lawful, prudent, convenient, *&c.* But, oh *dear Friends!* let all be watchful and diligent to wait in the Senſe and true Feeling of that Seed which never fell nor was beguiled, and you will (even the leaſt of you) ſee and comprehend his Workings and Transformings, and be delivered from them.

1. PURITY and HOLINESS was a Fruit in you, which doth yet flouriſh in many (bleſſed be the Lord) who are as watchful and careful to approve themſelves in Obedience to the Light of Truth in their inward Parts as ever, and find as great a Neceſſity both of trying and judging with its Judgment, as ever; theſe having thus waited, have renewed their Strength unto this very Day, and do mount up as upon the Wings of an Eagle; theſe

 are

are neither weary in running, nor faint they in their walking: But alas, *Friends!* even theſe do know with how great and manifold Aſſaults they have been aſſaulted, and know and ſee with Sorrow of Heart, how the Aſſault hath prevailed upon ſome, by working into the Mind a ſecret Liberty, and ſuppoſed Enlargedneſs, whereby a *Careleſneſs* hath entered ſome, and they having no Keeper but the Meaſure of *Light* revealed in their Hearts and Conſciences, ſo ſoon as they came to be perſuaded to ſlight the Reproofs of that, they ſoon erred; and this ſuppoſed Liberty entered, *That now, after ſo many Years Strictneſs and Circumſpection, they ſhould not need to ſtand ſo ſtraitly to try Things and Words as at firſt, becauſe now a Day of more Liberty was come*; and this Liberty ſecretly prevailed againſt that pure Fear that once was placed in their Hearts, and againſt the very Obedience of Truth, inwardly in the Subjection of the Mind, and then it became manifeſt outwardly; the Actions ſometimes blame-worthy, the Words and Speech again corrupted, and run into the old Channel of the World, like them again, and the ſingle pure Language, learned in the *Light*, in the Time of their Poverty and Simplicity, almoſt loſt and forgotten, and ſo the Work of God which he wrought, in a manner laid waſte: And then, when this Liberty is entered, and made uſe of as aforeſaid, oftentimes a ſecret Subtilty ariſeth againſt the Judgment of Truth, either from within, or from ſome outwardly, who are grieved with this looſe and careleſs Kind of ſpeaking or acting, which Subtilty leads to contend for it againſt the Judgment, telling the Creature,

ture, *Why, theſe Things are but ſmall Things, and little Things, and what, we muſt not ſtrain at a Gnat, and ſuch like.* Oh, *my Friends!* beware of theſe evil Suggeſtions of the wicked One: How came they to be ſmall and little Things, ſeeing they were great Things with us in the Beginning? And how comes an Offence of this Nature to be light now, ſeeing it was heavy in the Beginning? Oh let not the greateſt Mercies of our God ſo fill us, as to make us ſlight or forget the leaſt Obedience, but rather let the Continuance of his Mercy the more quicken you up unto a Zeal for his Name and Truth in all Things, to be found doing and ſpeaking according to the Rule of Righteouſneſs, which ye learned in the *Light*, in the Day of your being low and little, and then nothing will riſe up and be exalted in the Multitude of God's Mercies, but that holy Birth which lives in Purity when it is at higheſt; and ſo that Life of Righteouſneſs will ſhine forth more and more, which glorifies God, and ſeeks his Honour. *Dear Friends*, that ye may be kept ſo unto the End, is the Breathing and Travail of my Soul: And that where this Neglect hath entered, and this aforeſaid Corruption, either in Speech or Action, is to be found, that ye would receive the Word of Exhortation in Meekneſs and Fear, in which it is written unto you, and may redeem the Time, for the Days are and ſhall be evil, and none will hold the Myſtery of the Faith (which ſaves from falling in the evil Day) but ſuch as do keep the pure and undefiled Conſcience, which none can do, but by perſiſting and continuing in

the daily Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief and Obedience of the Truth.

2. A ſecond Fruit that was brought forth from this good Root, was UNITY and LOVE *one towards another*; which, bleſſed be the Lord, is preciouſly preſerved in and among many to this very Day, who are ſo ſenſible of the divers Operations of Truth in them to be all by one Spirit, that they are ſtill kept of one Heart and Mind, given up freely to ſerve the Lord in Singleneſs of Heart in their Generation; and are in this good Work as Strengtheners and Encouragers of one another; but, notwithſtanding, the Enemy hath been exceeding buſy to lay waſte and deſtroy this bleſſed Effect alſo, and that under divers Pretences, which the Lord ſtill diſcovered by his own Light and Spirit in his People, who have ſingly waited upon him; for many have been his Wiles, ſometimes fitting and preparing Veſſels to riſe up in the fleſhly and ſenſual Wiſdom, to traduce Friends, and bring in corrupt and evil Doctrines, to try who were not found in the Faith, that they might draw them aſide into an Heat and Zeal for ſomething which had not its Root in the Truth, and which they who abode in the Truth could not own, but judge and condemn in the Name of the Lord. Which, when ſuch ſaw, they took thereat Occaſion of ſtriving to propagate and promote that which they ſaw withſtood; ſo having loſt Subjection to the Spirit of Truth in themſelves, which would have kept them in Unity in the Body; and having alſo loſt and laid by their Subjection to thoſe who were over them in the Lord, they then grew ſtubborn and wilful, and proceed-

ed

ed in more Zeal for that which ſtood in Oppoſition to the Truth, than ever they did for the Truth itſelf; and theſe ſometimes have prevailed to the ſubverting whole Houſholds, and have turned ſeveral from the Faith and Simplicity which is in the Goſpel, who, as well as thoſe that ſubverted them, have loſt the Fellowſhip of the Saints, and the Savour of Life, both in themſelves and others, and then the Enemy perſuaded them, *all were dead to the Life but themſelves*; and ſo they grow to have a tickling Joy in what they do and ſay, in Obedience to that perverſe and ſingular private Spirit, and ſo grow up to ſpeak Evil of Dignities, and are unruly, and dare to ſpeak againſt Heaven, and them that dwell and inhabit in it, whom God makes to ſhine as Stars in the Firmament of his Power: But alas for them! my Soul pities them, when I ſee how they ſport themſelves with their own Deceivings; but the Day of the Lord is among his People, which hath and doth make them and their Spirits manifeſt, and their Fruits alſo have made them manifeſt.

Another Way that the Enemy ſeeks to break the *Unity*, and diſſolve the Bond of *Amity*, is, by ſowing a Seed of *Jealouſy* and *Prejudice* in the Hearts of ſuch in whom he can get an Entrance, that ſo they may ceaſe from the true and unfeigned Love, and that upon a pretended Reaſon, becauſe of this or that, which is ſuppoſed or imagined, in the evil Parts in themſelves, againſt others, giving heed to evil Thoughts or Surmiſes, which break forth many Times in Whiſperings and Tale-bearing; which, though the Thing

ſuppoſed

ſuppoſed to be evil, was really ſo, yet this is not to be allowed or given way to among you, but to uſe Plainneſs one towards another, and Single-heartedneſs, and to ſhut out the evil one in this his ſubtil Appearance alſo. Oh, *dear Friends!* remember how the Lord hath dealt with you, and deal you ſo one by another; he hath not ſought Occaſions againſt you, but hath long born and ſuffered, and exerciſed much Patience and Tenderneſs towards you, yet plainly reproving the Evil in you, and not treaſuring it up againſt you. Oh, *Friends!* be like-minded one towards another, that the Enemy of your Peace and Concord may be defeated, and you preſerved entire to one Head, even to Chriſt Jeſus, and ye may be one, and the Name of the Lord may be one among you; and that which tends to the making cold your Love, may be judged in all; and ſo Brotherly-Love will continue with you to the End.

Another Way which the Enemy works to ſcatter, and to bring from this *Unity*, is, by leading ſome, who have believed, into ſome Sin and Iniquity which the Body (who are in the Truth) are conſtrained to appear in Judgment againſt for the Truth's Sake; and yet notwithſtanding the Parties ſo ſinning being above the Witneſs in themſelves, which would bring them to own the Judgment of the Spirit of Chriſt in his Church, they exalt themſelves above the Judgment, and ſeek to gain to them ſuch whom they can enter, by their Words and Complaints, to take Part with them againſt the Judgment, and thoſe who paſſed it Such were thoſe whoſe Words *did eat* (the Apoſtle

Apoſtle ſaid) *as a Canker*, of whom the Believers in thoſe Days were to be aware; for commonly ſuch as have gone from the Power that ſhould have kept them clear and upright, will alſo turn againſt the Power in thoſe who abide in it, eſpecially if they be drawn forth to reprove and rebuke them: But let all ſuch know, that is not the Way to be renewed; and let all that take Part with any who work Iniquity, know, that they do but defile their own Souls thereby, and rend themſelves from that Body which they cannot proſper out of. And therefore, *dear Friends*, beware of joining with that, in yourſelves or in others, which the Power goeth againſt, let the Pretences be what they will; for that which doth Evil, will always be apt to ſow evil Complainings of others; and ſuch as are in the unſatisfied Murmuring againſt Judgment paſſed upon them, are much to be feared; for they thereby render themſelves the more guilty, and yet the further from Repentance. But, *dear Friends*, watch unto that which gives you a living Feeling of the living Body, which is the Church, that in all Things you may demean yourſelves as true Members of it, ſerving one another in Love, and ſubmitting yourſelves one unto another for the Lord's Sake, that in all Plainneſs and Singleneſs, as becometh the Truth, you may ſeek to preſerve the Unity which the Enemy of Truth and Peace doth envy; ſo ſhall ye continue to ſtrengthen one another's Hand in every good Work, and this ſhall tend to the weakening of the Hands of your Enemies, who ſeek to divide you, that they may rule over you. Many other Deſigns doth the wicked One try,

try, daily to break and divide, more than can now be named, or here inſerted; but they are all out of the *Light*, and if you be in it, you will ſee them, and that will preſerve you; for it is one, and did make us one, and will keep us to be of one Heart and Mind to the End, if we abide in it.

3. The third good Effect which Truth did work in the Beginning, in thoſe who did truly receive it, was ZEAL and FAITHFULNESS to God, in the bearing Teſtimony to what was manifeſt, though through great Sufferings; in which, as Friends abide in the Root, they do daily increaſe in Power, to fulfil the ſame Teſtimony; for the Mercy of the Lord doth engage them, and his Anſwer of Peace in the Midſt of their Trials doth arm and encourage them, and they hold out to the End; and for ſuch the Lord hath always made a Way, better than they could have made for themſelves: Yet the Enemy hath in this Matter alſo been very buſy, and hath prevailed with ſome under divers Conſiderations, or rather Conſultations, which he hath propounded unto them. But, Oh *Friends*, be ye all watchful, and take heed leſt any of the Teſtimonies of Truth be laid waſte; for that which leads to be weary of bearing Witneſs to the Truth, and to lay it waſte, the ſame will lay thee waſte, and bring thee into ſuch a State, as thou wilt want the Truth to bear Witneſs for thee; and though it be hard for Fleſh and Blood (which hath no Kingdom but here) to fall into the Hands of unreaſonable Men, yet it is a more fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God; and therefore, let all lukewarm Ones,

Ones, who are neither hot, nor cold, be awakened, and all, who have gone backwards, be warned to *return to their firſt Love, elſe the Lord will come againſt them, and the Day haſtens that will divide ſuch their Portion among Hypocrites, except they repent.*

But to touch at ſome of the Reaſons or Arguments which he, that abode not in the Truth himſelf, uſed to draw others into this Kind of treacherous Backſliding, obſerve as follows,

Firſt, He appears to ſome to perſuade them, that their *former Teſtimony* was borne more from an Imitation of others, than from a Work of the Power of God in themſelves; and that now, they not finding the Thing required of them, they may leave off their Teſtimonies, or may do ſuch Things as they have denied formerly: This Snare doth the Enemy make uſe of in theſe Days. But mark who it is that he hath caught with it; none but ſuch who ſometimes were low in their Minds, and dared not to grieve the Spirit of God in themſelves or others, but for the Truth's Sake could give up all Things, rather than their Teſtimony; but in Time growing careleſs and looſe in waiting, loſt that ſubject State, and grew high and exalted in their Minds above the Croſs that ſhould have crucified the betraying Wiſdom; and ſo having loſt the true Exerciſe of the Power, and the Feeling of the Excellency and Worth of the Truth, they knew not the Requirings of the Lord; and the earthly Mind got up, which placed a greater Eſteem upon earthly Things, than upon Things that are eternal; and ſo Things that once thou offeredſt up to God, thou takeſt again into

thine own Hand, and ſo robbeſt the Lord, and groweſt careful about outward Things, as other *Gentiles* do; and to cover thy Shame therein, the Enemy then tempts thee to belye the Power which once wrought in thy Heart, and made thee afraid to act againſt the *Light*, or to deny the Teſtimony for God in ſuch Things as were manifeſt, and then thou ſayeſt, *thou didſt it by Imitation*; but thou ſhalt know thy Covering is too narrow in the Day that haſteth upon thee.

Another Temptation which the Enemy preſenteth, is, that though thou art convinced *what to do*, or *what thou ſhouldſt deny*, yet the Trials are ſo hard and ſo many, and Perſecutors wax worſe and worſe, ſo that thou ſhalt not be able to hold out to the End; and where he can get Entrance with this Bait, he preſently cauſeth an evil Heart of Unbelief and Doubting to ariſe, which takes away even the Strength that the Lord did give, and ſo Feebleneſs doth enter the Mind, and a Spirit of Bondage leads thee to fear again; and then comes the Diſpute in thy Heart, whether thou *ſhalt ſtand* with the Power of God, in the Obedience, or whether thou *ſhalt fall* under that Power that ariſeth againſt God, and his Truth and People? And in this Combat thou haſt a ſubtil Enemy, uſing many Devices to betray thee; and a Part in thyſelf, not yet mortified, that is ready to ſay, *Pity thyſelf, pity thy Wife, pity thy Children, and pity thy Relations*; which it may be ſometimes, are all as ſo many Inſtruments of Satan to ſeduce thee, and lead thee into Darkneſs, that thou mayſt not ſee ſo great Neceſſity in thy bearing up thy Teſtimony, as indeed there is, nor

nor ſo great a Danger in the contrary, as indeed there is.

Oh *Friends!* at ſuch a Time as this, where is there any Help but in the *Lord?* Where canſt thou find a Saviour, but in that *Light* which gives to diſtinguiſh the ſeveral Voices? Now it is good for thee to remember, that *if thou walkeſt after the Fleſh, thou muſt and ſhalt ſurely die and wither*. In ſuch a Time flee, flee to the Lord, wait in his Dread to feel thy Strength but renewed at the preſent, and take no Care for Strength next Month, next Year, or next Trial, for *God is God, and changeth not, and will be the ſame to thee in ſeven Trials as in ſix, if thou believeſt and waiteſt on him in Uprightneſs*. And therefore fear not Man, but truſt in the Lord, all ye who have known and felt his Power, and let not in the Enemy of your Souls by the Door of *carnal Reaſoning*, but keep that ſhut; and rather conſider, how the Enemy makes thee as a Rejoicing among his own Children, and ſtrengthens that Hope in them, of their overcoming all others, as well as thee; which Hope is curſed, and ſhall be confounded. And conſider, that if thou letteſt fall thy Teſtimony, which thou haſt once borne for the Lord, thou makeſt the Heart of the Righteous ſad, and makeſt their Travail through that Teſtimony the harder for them, by reaſon of thy encouraging their Adverſaries by the Hope aforeſaid. And whatever thou doſt, *they muſt go thorough to the End, who will inherit the Crown of Immortality*.

And again conſider, it may be, that thy Backſliding, or cowardly drawing away the Shoulder,

may prove a Diſcouragement to others, and they may ſtumble in thy Stumbling, and fall with thee, and never be able to riſe, and ſo thou bringeſt their Blood alſo upon thee. Oh! remember alſo that the Servant of the Lord, who could ſay, *Pſalm* cxix. 157. *Many are my Perſecutors, and mine Enemies: yet do I not decline from thy Teſtimonies.* That was a noble Spirit becoming the Soldiers of Chriſt; yea, *though perſecuted by Princes*, as he ſaith, Verſ. 161.

Dear Friends, let your Minds be ſtirred up to be zealous for the Lord, in this the great Day of Controverſy with Darkneſs and its Power. Who hath God to bear Witneſs to his Name, but you? Among whom hath he made it known, as among you? Who have given up themſelves to the Lord, as you have done? Well, *Bleſſed are they that keep Covenant with the Lord, for they ſhall ſee his Glory.*

One more ſubtil Snare of the Enemy in this Matter is in my Heart to mention, which is this, *viz.* To perſuade thee for once to do that which the *Light* hath made manifeſt thou ſhouldſt not, with a Purpoſe afterwards to be more faithful. Oh *Friends!* In the Name and Fear of the Lord I exhort and warn you all to take heed of this, for it will prove but a falſe Confidence; thou wilt find this Kind of going out of the Guidance of Truth, to be a dear Out-going to thee, for if ever thou doſt return, it will be very hardly, and with bitter Anguiſh of Soul. Oh! do not tempt the Lord on this wiſe, *leſt it do prove impoſſible, upon thy ſinning willingly, to renew or reſtore thee again by Repentance*; thou wilt have thy *Pottage*, but wilt *loſe the Bleſſing, though thou*

thou may ſeek it with thy Tears; for while thou *wenteſt out, behold, thy Way became hedged up*, and the *thorny Nature* got up in thee, and ſo thou art *debarred* and *fenced out* from enjoying thy former State; Sin being entered, Death ſoon follows. Oh! Remember *Sampſon*, who when he had diſcloſed the Token of a *Nazarite*, in which State he ſtood in Covenant with God, yet thought to have ſhaken himſelf, and to have gone forth in his Strength, as at other Times, but was miſtaken, *Judges* xvi. 20. *for the Lord was departed from him, though he knew it not.* And ſo, though thou haſt known the Lord's Preſence and Power in thy Veſſel, yet take heed of letting in that treacherous Spirit, to lead thee to Unfaithfulneſs, and to betray the leaſt of his Truſts and Teſtimonies committed to thee, though it be but for *once*; for thereby thou will render thyſelf unworthy to be found a Witneſs of his Power another Time; for the Lord will leave that Veſſel, and often doth, and chuſeth other Veſſels to manifeſt himſelf in, who will be more true and faithful.

So, *dear Friends*, in true and tender Love I have laid theſe Things before you, that ye may all be ſtirred up and provoked to Love, and to good Works; that ye may abound in the Grace committed to you, and none of you who have known the Truth, may be entangled with the Wiles of your ſubtil Enemy; and that you who have begun well, may not loſe the Things that ye have wrought, but may perſevere in Well-doing till ye have finiſhed your Courſe in Peace. And, *Friends*, this is the Joy and Delight of thoſe who labour among you in the Lord, and hereby are

our

our Hands ſtrengthened, and our Hearts refreſhed, when we do find you ſuch as we deſire ye ſhould be, even ſtedfaſt in the Truth; and then alſo do you find us to you-ward, ſuch as ye deſire we ſhould be, even a Refreſhing in the Fellowſhip of Life unto you; and our God comforts us together in the mutual Joy and Comfort of his Holy Spirit, working in us and in you.

And, *Friends*, I am the more drawn forth at this Time to viſit you with an Epiſtle, becauſe the Lord hath given me ſome Sight of his great and dreadful Day, and Workings in it, which is at hand, and greatly haſtens, of which I have ſomething to ſay unto you, that ye may be prepared to ſtand in his Day, and may behold his wondrous Working among his Enemies, and have Fellowſhip with his Power therein, and may not be diſmayed nor driven away in the Tempeſt, which will be great.

And as concerning thoſe *Succeeding Times*, the Spirit of the Lord hath ſignified, that they will be Times of Horror and Amazement to all thoſe who have, and yet do reject his Counſel: For as the Days of his Forbearance, Warning and Inviting, have been long, ſo ſhall his Appearance amongſt thoſe who have withſtood him, be fierce and terrible; even ſo terrible, as *who ſhall abide his Coming?* For the Lord will work both ſecretly and openly, and his Arm ſhall be manifeſt to his Children in both.

Secretly, he ſhall raiſe up a continual fretting Anguiſh amongſt his Enemies, one againſt another, ſo that being vexed and tormented inwardly, they ſhall ſeek to make each other miſerable, and delight

delight therein for a little Seaſon: And then the Prevailer muſt be prevailed over, and the Digger of the Pit muſt fall therein; and the Confidence which Men have had in one another ſhall fail, and they will beguile and betray one another, both by Counſel and Strength; and as they have banded themſelves to break you whom God had gathered, ſo ſhall they band themſelves one againſt another, to break, to ſpoil and deſtroy one another; and through the Multitude of their Treacheries, all Credit or Belief, upon the Account of their ſolemn Engagement, ſhall fail; ſo that few Men ſhall count themſelves, or what is theirs, ſafe in the Hand of his Friend, who hath not choſen his Safety and Friendſhip in the pure Light of the unchangeable Truth of God: And all the ſecret Counſels of the Ungodly ſhall be brought to nought, ſometimes by the Means of ſome of themſelves, and ſometimes by Impoſſibilities lying in their Way, which ſhall make their Hearts fail of ever accompliſhing what they have determined; and in this State ſhall Men fret themſelves for a Seaſon, and ſhall not be able to ſee the Hand that turns againſt them, but ſhall turn to fight againſt one Thing, and another, and a third Thing, and ſhall ſtagger and reel in Counſel and in Judgment, as drunken Men who know not where to find the Way to Reſt; and when they do yet ſtir themſelves up againſt the holy People, and againſt the holy Covenant of Light, and them who walk in it, they ſhall but the more be confounded; for theſe ſhall be helped with a little Help, which all the Ungodly ſhall not hinder them of, *to wit*, the ſecret Arm of the Lord maintaining

maintaining their Cauſe, and raiſing up a Witneſs in the very Hearts of their Adverſaries to plead their Innocency; and this ſhall make them yet the more to vex themſelves, and to go thorough hard-beſtead; for when they ſhall look upward to their Religion, to their Power, Policy, or Preferments, or Friendſhips, or whatſoever elſe they had truſted in, and relied upon, they ſhall have Cauſe to curſe them; and when they look downwards to the Effects produced by all thoſe Things, behold, then Trouble, and Horror, and Vexation takes hold on them, and drives them to Darkneſs; and having no Help but what is earthly, and being out of the Knowledge of the mighty overturning Power of the Lord God Almighty, they ſhall deſpair and wear out their Days with Anguiſh. And beſides all this, the terrible Hand of the Lord is, and ſhall be openly manifeſted againſt this ungodly Generation, by bringing grievous and terrible Judgments and Plagues upon them, tumbling down all Things in which their Pride and Glory ſtood, and overturning even the Foundations of their Strength; yea, the Lord will lay waſte the Mountain of the Ungodly, and the Strength of the fenced City ſhall fail; and when Men ſhall ſay, *We will take Refuge in them*, Nahum iii. 12, 13. they ſhall become but a Snare, and there ſhall the Sword devour: And when they ſhall ſay, *We will go into the Field, and put Truſt in the Number and Courage of our Soldiers*, they ſhall both be taken away: And this Evil alſo will come of the Lord, and his Hand will be ſtretched out ſtill, and ſhall bring Confuſion, Ruin upon Ruin, and War upon War; and the Hearts of Men

Men ſhall be ſtirred in them, and the Nations ſhall be as Waters, into which a Tempeſt, a ſwift Whirlwind is entered; and even as Waves ſwell up to the Diſſolution one of another, and breaking one of another, ſo ſhall the Swellings of People be: And becauſe of the Hardſhip and Sorrow of thoſe Days, many ſhall ſeek and deſire Death rather than Life.

Ah! my Heart relents, and is moved within me, in the Senſe of theſe Things, and much more than I can write or declare, which the Lord will do in the Earth, and will alſo make haſte to accompliſh among the Sons of Men, that they may know and confeſs, *That the* MOST HIGH *doth rule in the Kingdoms of Men, and pulleth down and ſetteth up according to his own Will: And this ſhall Men do before ſeven Times paſs over them, and ſhall be content to give their Glory unto him that ſits in Heaven.*

But, Oh *Friends!* while all theſe Things are working, and bringing to paſs, repoſe ye yourſelves in the Munition of that Rock, which all theſe Shakings ſhall not move, even in the Knowledge and Feeling of the eternal Power of God, keeping you ſubjectly given up to his heavenly Will, and feel it daily to kill and mortify that which remains in any of you, which is of this World; for the worldly Part in any, is the changeable Part, and that is up and down, full and empty, joyful and ſorrowful, as Things go well or ill in the World: For as the Truth is but one, and many are made Partakers of its Spirit, ſo the World is but one, and many are Partakers of the Spirit of it; and ſo many as do partake of it, ſo

many will be ſtraitened and perplexed with it; but they who are ſingle to the Truth, waiting daily to feel the Life and Virtue of it in their Hearts, theſe ſhall rejoice in the midſt of Adverſity, theſe ſhall not have their Hearts moved with Fear, nor toſſed with Anguiſh becauſe of evil Tidings, *Pſal.* cxii. 7, 8. becauſe that which fixeth them remains with them: Theſe ſhall know their Entrance with the Bridegroom, and ſo be kept from Sorrow, though his Coming be with a Noiſe; and when a Midnight is come upon Man's Glory, yet, they being ready and prepared, it will be well with them, and having a true Senſe of the Power working in themſelves, they cannot but have Unity and Fellowſhip with the Works of it in the Earth, and will not at all murmur againſt what is, nor wiſh nor will what is not to be; theſe will be at reſt till the Indignation paſſeth over, and theſe having no Deſign to carry on, nor any Party to promote in the Earth, cannot poſſibly be defeated nor diſappointed in their Undertakings.

And when you ſee Diviſions, and Parties, and Rendings in the Bowels of Nations, and Rumours and Tempeſts in the Minds of People, then take heed of being moved to this Party or to that Party, or giving your Strength to this or that, or counſelling this Way or that Way; but ſtand ſingle to the Truth of God, in which neither War, Rent, nor Diviſion is; and take heed of that Part in any of you, which truſts and relies upon any Sort of the Men of this World, in the Day of their Proſperity, for the ſame Party will bring you to ſuffer with them in the Time of their

their Adverſity, which will not be long after; for Stability in that Ground there will be none; but when they ſhall ſay, *Come join with us in this or that*, remember you are joined to the Lord by his pure Spirit, to walk with him in Peace and in Righteouſneſs, and you feeling this, it will gather out of all Buſtlings, and Noiſes, and Parties, and Tumults, and lead you to exalt the Standard of Truth and Righteouſneſs, in an innocent Converſation, to ſee who will flow unto that; and this ſhall be a Refuge for many of the weary, toſſed and afflicted Ones in thoſe Days, and a Shelter for many, whoſe Day is not yet over.

So, *dearly beloved Friends* and *Brethren*, who have believed and known the bleſſed Appearance of the Truth, let not your Hearts be troubled at any of theſe Things: Oh! let not the Things that are at preſent, nor Things that are yet to come, move you from your Stedfaſtneſs, but rather double your Diligence, Zeal, and Faithfulneſs to the Cauſe of God: For they who know the Work wrought in themſelves, ſhall *reſt in the Day of Trouble; although the Fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall the Fruit be in the Vines, the Labour of the Olive ſhall fail, and the Fields ſhall yield no Meat, the Flocks ſhall be cut off from the Fold, and there ſhall be no Herd in the Stalls; yet theſe ſhall rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of their Salvation*, Hab. iii. 16, 17, 18.

And how near theſe Days are to this poor Nation, few know, and therefore the Cry of the Lord is very loud unto its Inhabitants, through his Servants and Meſſengers, that they would prize their Time while they have it, leſt they be

overturned, waſted, and laid deſolate before they are aware, and before Deſtruction come upon them, and there be no Remedy, as it hath already done upon many.

Oh LONDON! LONDON! That thou and thy Rulers would have conſidered, and hearkened and heard, in the Day of thy Warnings and Invitations, and not have perſiſted in thy Rebellion, till the Lord was moved againſt thee, to cut off the Thouſands and Multitudes from thy Streets, and the preſſing and thronging of People from thy Gates, and then to deſtroy and ruin thy Streets alſo, and lay deſolate thy Gates, when thou thoughteſt to have repleniſhed them again.

And, Oh! ſaith my Soul, that thy Inhabitants would yet be warned, and perſuaded to repent and turn to the Lord, by putting away every one the Evil that is in their Hearts, againſt the Truth in themſelves, and againſt thoſe who walk in it, before a greater Deſolation and Deſtruction overtake them.

Oh! What ſhall I ſay to prevail with LONDON, and with its Inhabitants! The Lord hath called aloud, he hath roared out of *Sion* unto them, but many of them have not hearkened at all, nor conſidered at all.

Well, Oh *my Friends!* (and thou, oh my Soul!) return to your Reſt, dwell in the Pavilion of the Houſe of your God, and my God, and ſhelter yourſelves under the Shadow of his Wings, where ye ſhall be Witneſſes of his Doings, and ſee his ſtrange Act brought to paſs, and ſhall not be hurt therewith, nor diſmayed.

Oh,

Oh, *my Friends!* in the Bowels of dear and tender Love have I ſignified theſe Things unto you, that ye may ſtand armed with the whole Armour of God, cloathed in Righteouſneſs, and your Feet ſhod with the Preparation of the Goſpel of Peace, and freely given up in all Things to the Diſpoſing of the Lord, who will deliver us, not by Might, nor by Sword, nor by Spear, but by his own eternal inviſible Arm will he yet ſave us and deliver us, and get himſelf a Name by preſerving of us; and we ſhall yet live to praiſe him who is worthy of Glory, of Honour and Renown, from the Riſing of the Sun to the Setting of the ſame, now and for ever, *Amen, Amen,* ſaith my Soul.

POSTSCRIPT.

Dear Friends and Brethren,

I HAVE ſomething further in my Heart to communicate unto you, in dear and tender Love, and in Deſire of your Preſervation out of the Snare of your Adverſary; and that is, to exhort you all to dwell in the pure Judgment of the Truth, which is a Defence upon your Glory; and let none bereave you of this, under any Pretence whatſoever; but as you come to a true Feeling of the Life in yourſelves, to which alone the certain Judgment appertaineth, ſo let this Life have Freedom, and ſtop it not from judging all that which is at Enmity with the Life, and tends to the hurting of the true Plant of God; for I have ſeen a Harm hath come to many who have

have parted with their Judgment, and ſo have become unarmed, and the Enemy hath prevailed upon them (under a pretended Tenderneſs) to permit or ſuffer ſuch Things as were hurtful to themſelves and others; and though the Lord hath given them Judgment and Diſcerning in the Matter, yet were bereaved of that Gift, and ſo by little and little became beguiled.

Oh *dear Friends!* Conſider theſe Days are perilous Times, and it is needful for every one to watch in that ſame eternal Light to which you were firſt turned, that by its righteous Judgment ye may be preſerved from every Thing in yourſelves, that appears contrary to that precious Life of which you have taſted: And when you have ſo done, then take heed, that the Enemy doth not do that by an Inſtrument, which (through your Watchfulneſs in the Light) he could not do without; and all beware of that affected Tenderneſs, that cries out, *Be tender to all, and pray for all, and mind the Good in all, and love all, and judge none, but leave Judgment to God*, &c. I ſay, heed not the plauſible Words of that Spirit, which being guilty, to ſave its own Head from a Stroke, would bereave you of your Judgment, which God hath given you, and is indeed truly his Judgment, and is to be adminiſtered in his Wiſdom and Power, for the cleanſing and keeping clean his Sanctuary; for ſuch as have no Judgment in their Goings, are they who know not the true Way of Peace, but make them crooked Paths, *He that goeth in them ſhall not know Peace*, Iſa. lix. 8.

But ſome may ſay, *Was not Chriſt meek and lowly? and ought not all to be like unto him?*

'Tis

'Tis true, *my Friends*; but there is a Difference between the Seed's Suffering and its Reigning, and there are Times for them both: And when it doth pleaſe God to permit the Hour and Power of Darkneſs, in the open Perſecutors, to exalt itſelf againſt his Seed and People, by Perſecution or ſuch like, they are led by his Spirit to appear in Meekneſs and Quietneſs, as a Sheep before the Shearer. But what is this to ſuffering bad and perverſe Spirits, that appear under Pretence of the Truth, and yet are out of the Truth, and Enemies to its Proſperity, ſtriving to exalt and ſet up another Thing inſtead of the Truth? Such as theſe the Lord doth not require you to uſe only Patience and Meekneſs towards, but if that will not reclaim them, they muſt know the Judgment of the Truth, and you in it muſt ſtand over them; for in this caſe the Day of the Exaltation of Chriſt is come, and God is crowning Truth with Dominion over every falſe Spirit, and corrupt Practice thereof.

And therefore, *dear Friends*, eye the Lord in his Goings forth, and as you feel his Life in you to witneſs againſt any evil or corrupt Thing or Practice, uſe Plainneſs, and keep Sincerity, and turn not Judgment backwards; for that which is unwilling to be judged, and cries out, *Judge none, leave all to God*, &c. the ſame will take upon it both to judge and rule, but not in the Wiſdom of God; and thoſe who cry out ſo much for Tenderneſs, and againſt Truth's Judgment, the ſame are moſt dangerous to be drawn out from the patient Suffering in the Spirit of Chriſt Jeſus, when they ought to appear in the moſt Meekneſs,

and

and to appear rough and wrathful in the ſtriving and fighting Nature, and are moſt apt to be tempted into a Spirit of Revenge, as hath been ſeen by ſad Experience; for they who loſe the Exerciſe of that by which all ſhould keep Dominion over Deceit, they loſe that Strength by which they ſhould be enabled to ſuffer all Things for the Sake of Chriſt Jeſus.

So, *dear Friends*, in that which keeps out the Defiler and the Betrayer, all wait upon the Lord, that you may have your Armour on, and be fortified with the Strength, with the Might, and with the Judgments of God, and keep that under in every Place, which under Pretence of Tenderneſs and Forbearance would make void the Teſtimony of Truth, or make the Offence of the Croſs to ceaſe in any thing wherein you have been inſtructed from the Beginning, that the Lord may behold and ſee Judgment eſtabliſhed, and be pleaſed, *Iſaiah* lix. *The Lord looked, and there was no Judgment, and it diſpleaſed him*; for thereby Deceit got up, which with it is to be kept down.

So the Lord God of Power and Wiſdom preſerve you faithful, and fitted for every good Word and Work; the Strong to watch over the Weak in Singleneſs, and the Weak to be ſubject to the Strong in the Lord, that ſo the pure Plant of Righteouſneſs and Truth may grow in and among you all, to his Praiſe that hath called you: To whom be Glory and Honour for ever. Amen.

S. CRISP.